

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

--A slice decoder control circuit (46), ~~having received the input of a parameter of a picture layer, sequentially supplies the parameter of the picture layer and the write pointer of a first slice 1-to-a-slice-decoder (47) to a first slice decoder, the parameter of the picture layer and the write pointer of a second slice 2-to-a-slice-decoder (48) to a second slice decoder, and the parameter of the picture layer and the write pointer of a slice 3-to-a-slice-decoder (49) third slice to a third slice decoder, and causes the slice decoders to decode the respective parameters and write pointers. On the basis of the input of signals indicating the completion of decoding processing inputted from the slice decoders (47) to (49), the slice decoder control circuit (46) supplies the write pointer of a fourth slice 4-to-the-slice-decoder (48) to the second decoder and causes the second slice decoder (48) to decode the write pointer at timing A, and supplies the write pointer of a fifth slice 5-to-the-slice-decoder (49) to the third decoder and causes the third slice decoder (49) to decode the write pointer at timing B. Subsequently, the similar processing is repeated until the last slice is decoded. The operations of a plurality of slice decoders are thus controlled.--~~